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JULIAN THE APOSTATE

Some sixteen hundred years ago, the people of a proscribed sect were exalted by the announcement of a conversion. An imperial proselyte had been found, and the battle for existence under which the religion had flourished could now become a peace of propaganda. Such, doubtless, was the fond dream of many an ardent bishop, who had not yet felt the canker of ecclesiastical schism within his bosom, as he meditated on that fair day when the Pagan Constantine announced himself a Christian. Constantine's conversion was a triumph of Christianity and of an unscrupulous personal ambition.

Three Christian sons divided a vast empire, and held a butchery of imperial possibilities. Then, with minds more at ease, they dispersed to the ends and centre of the enlightened earth. Their thrones were secure; for only two small children, brothers, cousins to the imperial three, had been spared from the massacre at Constantinople.

But within those three royal breasts the applause of Christ was far more prominent than his emulation. Two brothers clashed and one was slain in an ambush—that left two brothers. One brother, whose life was necessary to the other, because of the magnitude of the Empire, was slaughtered by a German usurper—that left one brother. Yet the Furies—which appeared on earth for many centuries in the shapes of the royal eunuchs—were athirst. The last brother lived miserably, a coward who shone in censored reports, and desolately he died. His death completed the tale of the first four Christian rulers of an empire truly purple—purple every foot of it with a purple deeper than the dye of the Phœnician murex.

The Great Emperor—the last of three brothers—was smitten maybe by a qualm of conscience, or he needed a reed to lean upon; for he chose the brother of a hero, and called him "Cæsar." The Brother and the Hero alone of a numerous family had escaped the massacre at Constantinople—which was already a great city.

When Julius Constantius fell at Constantinople, his son Julian

was six years of age. After an early training under the guidance of Mardonius, an aged eunuch of profound learning and polytheistic tendencies, Julian was transferred with his brother Gallus to Macellum, a lonely rock-fortress of Cappadocia. At Macellum the two striplings were carefully guarded by the Great Emperor's jealousy, and an attempt was made to instil Christian doctrines into the minds of both youths.

The Brother became a Christian; Julian did not.

For six years the two young brothers were served in luxury by a household of imperial spies at Macellum, and then Gallus became the helpmate to the Great Emperor. Julian passed to the city of Constantinople and then to Nicomedia in Asia, ever under the watchful eye of an emperor already jealous of the reputed learning of the young cousin who might just as easily have been laid to rest with that emperor's uncle in the Byzantine shambles.

Unceasingly was he watched by the imperial eunuchs—official barbarities originated for convenience by an eastern queen—ever was he commanded to be a Christian; and ever did he despise the Christian religion more and more—for even now the dreamed-of millennium was a fancy; Arian and Athanasian were fanatically cutting each other's throats, literally and doctrinally. Semi-Arian Origenist and Orthodox were wrangling not-sweetly over the contents of a word: should it contain this ten or that ten letters? The debate had not originated for the sake of a Greek word, but many of the fiercest and most godless men of God had long since forgotten the object of the mêlée. Had they ever known that object? Indeed it was involved, and mysteriously drawn by the few who plucked the essence from the chaos.

The metaphysics of Neo-Platonism plus its foundation of Platonic rationalism was waging a losing fight with Christianity even prior to the conversion of Constantine. Neo-Platonism strove to foist a row of empty symbols—an o'er-topped myth-legend—on a public which craved moral regeneration, not by reason, but by faith. Hence it did not carry the better classes of the Great Empire. Neo-Platonism strove to introduce severity and simplicity into the daily life of an

Oriental rabble. Hence the rabble laughed aloud—at Neo-Platonism. Therefore this involved philosophy of rationalism and metaphysics failed before on-rushing Christianity—failed through its empty vices and its out-of-date virtues, a Hellenism without a Hellas. For Christianity offered an historical Redeemer, a vigorous figure; and marshalled sentiment against cold reason, and spoke ecstatically of a glorious hereafter, and the EQUALITY OF MAN. Hence it appealed to the majority of those who yearned and by the vices of wealthy display that crept into the organization subsequent to the conversion of Constantine, it swept the rabble before it. Neo-Platonism was a matter of opinion—a philosophy open to whosoever would; Christianity was a matter of conviction—in it lay salvation and without awaited damnation (a belief developed fully by Theodosius)—and was propagated by an admirable hierarchy. In the end Christianity absorbed the best of Neo-Platonic metaphysics—the public demanded mystery—and the system best suited to adoption was that of Origen, Hellenist or Semi-Arian. From myth-legend to saint-worship and the iconoclastic controversy was but a step.

No sooner did the Church feel herself to be secure from persecution and impending disaster than small cracks and hidden chasms within the ranks widened into mighty canyons, conversion of the Gentile was forgot, and Athanasius flew at the throat of Arius Agonistes. Arianism retained rational explanation—it strove to explain the First Cause—and Athanasius triumphed at Nicæa, in the year of his Lord 325. Mysticism was triumphant—mysticism akin to the fanaticism of the Sabellians in its explanation of the Trinity—but a slight bridge between the loftiest and the most material of the wrangling sects.

And still they fought.

One emperor favored Orthodoxy, and the next favored Arianism, and the Empire split in its sympathies—which decrees could not change—and libel, and blasphemy were in the air and Christian blood was shed by Christian hands; and nowhere there was religious peace—in Europe, Asia, or Africa—save at the rustic shrine, where a Greek divinity was adored to the tinkle of

falling waters and the scents of a forest; or the drip of melted snow; or the crash of a gull-flurred surf on some isolated islet, where the worshiper soared above himself and his embattled fellow-men on the pinions of Nature, Mighty Mother of Gods.

So Christianity of the Gospel was obscured, and those, who might have seen, saw only discord and family bloodshed.

In the midst of this religious strife, Julian was born, and from the day on which his Christian cousins—the three sons of Constantine the Great—slaughtered the relatives in Constantinople, the child hated the Christian creed. And even as a child he fed upon myths and philosophy of ancient Greece—"Hellenism," he termed the combination. He was watched so jealously by the Great Emperor that he was forced to move from place to place, always befriended by the Great Empress, Eusebia, always studying; and secretly worshipping Greco-Oriental divinities.

Picture to yourself a young man of twenty-four, nervous of temperament, one who can claim no man as confidant, of pent-up emotions, who from his youth has found but intermittent solace in the fellowship of man—to whom the student's papyrus and the solitude of Nature have been boon companions. One day comes a summons to the recluse. He is to appear before the man who butchered his father and beheaded his brother; for Gallus Cæsar is now dead. Must he, the last male of his house, save that one upon the throne, go to the summons and be slain? He prays to his immortal gods. He goes and is proclaimed Cæsar! Second in rank to the hated and despised emperor he stands, unexercised in his offices of peace or war, married to his cousin, the sister of his lord. And why was he, a man whose existence troubled the Great Emperor, chosen to such a position; and did the poet-philosopher remain a stranger to that public and martial post?

The Great Empire was menaced in the golden deserts of the East by a mighty monarch, Sapor of Persia, a monarch now in his glory. And in the forest of the West, the tall, fair-haired barbarians who drank beer and swung battle-axes on the banks of a blue river that has run red more often than we care to think of, were ripping the provinces of the Great Emperor wofully,

and humiliating his proud name, despite large tribute of silver from the Imperial Treasury.

The emperor could not lead an army against both, and would not lead an army at all, if he could avoid it. He trusted the Hero, Julian, "because he had more faith in the one who had the right to accuse him than in those whose duty it was to be grateful to him." Also the Great Empress showed her lord what she considered to be the Light of Reason.

Has any military leader's ambitions out-soared those of Julian—now soldier—fresh-snatched from the lecture-hall? We think not. Has any man been possessed of greater courage, and has any general ever gripped the hearts of his soldiers with a greater love? Assuredly, no. Napoleon was trained to fight, and so was Charles XII of Sweden, whose brief martial flame might be compared with that of Julian. But Julian was virtually reared in the cloister, yet was a very viking among men when the call to arms was sounded; and amidst the din of battle, this warrior remained priest, poet, and philosopher. His stars remained in the ascendant simultaneously.

The Hero went to the forests of the North carefully and jealously watched by a great emperor. And there he won to him a mercenary soldiery and a soldiery of corrupt legionaries by the humanity of his understanding and the simplicity of his manner. Also his courage and his firmness made him brother to the man with whom he toiled on foot and in the mire, with whom he ate of the meagerest fare, with whom he went hungry, and with whom he fought in the blood and sweat at the head of a column.

On a day in the winter of 355-356, the scholar-general galloped toward the forest of Gaul, escorted by three hundred and sixty legionaries. From the open rivers of the South he came, past the withered stubble of lower Peidmont, and on into the dark snow-clad sentinels, the forests of Roman Gaul. Roman Gaul indeed? And why "Roman"? For the Teutonic barbarians who mingled with the forest shadows across the Rhine continually gave the lie to that appellation. Headed by fierce chieftains, they crossed the great blue river and penetrated Gallia at will for many miles. The Roman bank from Strassburg

to the Northern Ocean, in a belt some fifty miles wide, was desolated and the Gallic villages were in ashes. The inhabitants lived in constant dread of swiftly moving German hordes, and the Great Emperor—even the Great Emperor—paid much silver for short truces.

To make the Rhine a Roman stream; to sweep the Germans from their own bank backward; to rebuild the Roman bank; to reestablish confidence and prosperity in Gaul itself; and to render the Roman arms once more dreadful to the barbaric forayers was the task facing the Cæsar, when he considered the situation in the frozen city of Lugudunum during the winter of 356.

And the Great Emperor writhed on his oriental couch, when he remarked the path of glory opened by him to his hated cousin, the Cæsar. And he reflected: "Surely this bearded philosopher of Athens will succumb to conditions too harsh for a coarse legionary." And his mind was easier. Then a eunuch, perhaps Eusebius, the chamberlain of the palace, whispered in the Great Ear: "Leave no stone unturned." And so it happened that generals were sent to Gaul for the sole purpose of disobeying the Cæsar and bringing about his destruction.

Despite these machinations, campaigns of brilliancy unparalleled marked the career of the Gallic leader.

In successive marches, Julian spurs his army,—an army used to flee before Teutonic axes,—and towns are relieved, battles fought and won—chief among them the engagement at Strassburg, where 13,000 imperial troops annihilated 35,000 Germans under the giant Cnodomar; the Rhine again becomes a Roman stream, even to the mouth, where the hitherto unconquered Franks bend to the Roman Eagle. Not only in Gaul, but in the German forests also, he leads his reanimated legions, and the Teutons are quelled for many miles from the river bank.

Three times did the young soldier cross the Rhine and for more than five years did he rule in Gaul, despite opposition and interference from imperially appointed subordinates; for the Great Emperor waxed ever more green with jealousy and suppressed the name of his heroic cousin in favor of his own, when publishing reports of the Gallic engagements.

Julian had marched and fought, eaten and slept, with his infantrymen, and now he lived and administered justice among his Gauls. He rebuilt desolated cities and villages, civilization crept once again to the Rhine bank, and the blue water, undimmed with wind-blown ash, again reflected zig-zag towers of white brick and swordless sword-arms.

The inhabitants of the north woods became actually happy, and men slept once more without one hand on the battle-axe, because a young hero strode through Gaul from his chosen city of Lutetia, carrying justice and prosperity with him. "He was at the same time an exalted idealist . . . ; a commander of genius; a heroic soldier; and an expert administrator." The effect of his coming to Gaul is thus seen through the eyes of an admiring though discreet Roman officer: "In an instant he shone so brightly as to be judged for prudence a new Titus, his successes in war equal to those of Trajan, humane as Antonius, and in abstract mental investigations to be the peer of Marcus Aurelius, whom he wished to emulate in his actions and habits." The same soldier is struck by the fact that a young man "transplanted suddenly into the midst of the dust of Mars, not from a military tent, but from the tranquil shades of the Academies, subdued Germany, and having pacified the regions of the frozen Rhine, killed and bound in chains the barbarian kings thirsting for blood."

The decay of the Empire of the West was delayed by the constructive results of the young Cæsar's administration. The grateful people of Gaul compared this period to a serene, resplendent *sunrise after a most gloomy night*. In his manifesto to the Athenians, Julian, with dignified pride, thus summarizes his stay in Gaul: "Three times I crossed the Rhine; I recovered from the barbarians twenty thousand prisoners, who were found beyond the Rhine; in two battles and one siege I captured thousands of men in the flower of their age; I sent to Constantine four battalions of the strongest infantry, three not quite so strong, two cohorts of the most daring cavalry: now by the favor of the gods, I am master of all the cities, having retaken a few less than forty."

Then in the year 360, the Great Emperor, overcome by jealousy

and evil counsel, desiring naught save the destruction of the sole surviving male of the house of Constantine the Pale (Chlorus), sends a messenger to the idol of Gaul, to the young hero amid his devoted legions, an ambassador saying to the picked warriors of Gaul that they shall leave their upland forests and hasten to the burning sands of Asia; for a mighty monarch is to be checked.

The summoned legions were composed of men who had enlisted to fight only in their own snow-bathed mountains and forests. They were discontented. Their discontent permeated the entire army. The army loved Julian—and he was proclaimed “Augustus”—Great Emperor!

Apparently the young leader accepted the perilous honor only when forced into the contract by his followers. Was his reluctance assumed or genuine? Probably his unwillingness was sincere, though possibly his friends—not entirely unknown to him—connived at the end attained: his friends who clung to Paganism, and regarded him in the light of a Redeemer. Julian had only to wait until his cousin's death to ascend the imperial throne—he was the last male descendant of an illustrious emperor. And he was too much of a soldier and patriot to desire an empire-wracking conflict within the imperial domains—such a conflict as that of Mursa; wherein Constantius defeated Magnentius the barbarian usurper, assassin of his brother Constantius; wherein Roman legionaries foamed away against Roman legionaries, and the strength of the empire, the guard of the vast northern frontier, slew itself upon the swords of its brothers-in-arms.

The Great Emperor himself was in the far East when Julian's courier brought proposals from the new Augustus, who was willing to make certain dignified concessions to his senior. The senior was indeed wroth, and he told his army so.

Up to the point of commencing hostilities with the Great Emperor, Julian, who is known as the Apostate, preserved a semblance of Christianity for politic reasons—not a very honest act on his part; for he was pagan to the core from early childhood. Early in the year 361, however, Julian heard that Constantius was preparing supplies prior to marching against him; and flaring forth into open Paganism he entrusts his cause to

the "Immortal Gods," and sweeps eastward in three divisions, having left an appreciable guard under his able friend Sallustius in Gaul itself. Up to Sirmio, in Savia, he sweeps, driving before him or capturing the advanced outposts of the Great Emperor. He sends a message to the senate in Rome in which he assumes the Empire, and denounces Constantius.

And then Constantius came West—somewhat!

He left Edessa—which is in Asia Minor—for Antioch; from Antioch he went to Tarsus, where he became sick with fever; from Tarsus he went to Mopsucrenae; and from Mopsucrenae he probably went to Hell; for in that town he died, and the Empire was delivered from civil war into the hands of a brilliant hero, a man destined to waste his extraordinary talents in ineffectual efforts to turn backward a religious tide, and die young.

In December of 361 Julian was received at Constantinople amidst popular applause. He decreed capital punishment to five political prisoners—one condemnation being perhaps the deepest blot upon a name so linked with justice.

He cleared the imperial palace of its hundreds of useless retainers and servants—a veritable rabbit-warren for the worthless, it had been; and incurred the indignation of many because of his simplicity of habit. He, in turn, sighed for his virtuous Gallic Lutetia, when forced to view the lascivious East at close quarters.

Julian's wife, Helena, had died just before her husband moved from Gaul against her brother Constantius, and the Hero is said never to have shared the couch of a woman after her death. Such a man the city of Antioch could scarce attract—Antioch in which Luxury found her mirror. And mutual dislike between the citizens of that metropolis and their emperor was not concealed. At Antioch the emperor rested in 362, already drawing towards the second and last field of his military career, the sands of Iran. At Antioch, then, he rested and gazed towards the desert-bound valley of the river Euphrates—gazed with his back to the Danube, with his back to the danger-centre of the Empire. His usual energy had fortified and amply garrisoned the western river frontiers ere he departed from Constantinople

for Antioch, but his perspicacity was sadly in error when he chose Persian antagonists in preference to Gothic, caught unawares undoubtedly by his admiration for Alexander the Great, and pressed by an inordinate desire to emulate the Macedonian's march to Indic Jaxartes.

In Persia reigned a mighty monarch, a monarch so mighty as to turn aside great rivers from their courses when he wished to float his warships against the walls of a Roman city—a monarch so absolute that the heads of his satraps were as meat to his swine, and the beasts of the jungle filled the ranks of his myriads. For the elephants of Asia fought the battles of Sapor, when the arms of his enemy stood to the blight of his numberless archers.

Sapor was yet in his prime, when the Roman Julian moved against him, though the Shah had reigned already half a century—in his very prime; for he had been crowned monarch while still in the body of his mother—literally crowned, before the adoring Magi and princes. From the year 337 onward, Sapor had harassed the Roman border and troubled the territory of Arsaces, king of Armenia and ally to the Romans, and his arms were universally dreaded by the Roman soldier. Libanius says that a picture of Persian soldiers was sufficient to frighten the Roman legionary. Constantius had not managed his Persian campaigns well, and Sapor had finally captured the strong city of Amida in Mesopotamia after a memorial siege.

And so Julian turned his back upon the fair Goth in his black forests, and saw only the swarthy Persian, derisively agrin to his plains of sun-baked clay. And in March of 363 the fighting idealist left Antioch for the river Euphrates. The Persian court was well satisfied to be at peace with Rome, and so notified the Western emperor, but heedless of these overtures, Julian pushed his war-cloud eastward—Roman legionaries and auxiliaries, and their allies, auxiliaries from Gaul—men destined to wilt under the eastern sun-glare,—allies from Asia—the men of Arsaces, king of Armenia.

So he passed the Euphrates and divided his army into two parts. One portion he sent east to the Tigris for a defence to his otherwise unprotected flank. That division, under Pro-

copius, proved of absolutely no assistance whatsoever and never coalesced with the main division during the now numbered days of Julian Augustus. With the main division Julian followed the Euphrates southward and, at Circesium, was met by a fleet of one thousand Roman vessels of war and supply. Ever opposed by his sooth-sayers, who repeatedly augured disaster, Julian pushed forward to the capital of Sapor—Ctesiphon on the Tigris—pushed forward at the head of his men, taking city after city, fortress after fortress, and winning bloody battles in the van of his columns, where he displayed marvelous valor and endurance while cheering his soldiers onward. Up to the walls of Ctesiphon he led his army while he floated his fleet from the Euphrates to the Tigris by Trajan's canal, an abandoned waterway which he was compelled to redig.

Up to this point Julian had advanced into Persia very much as Bonaparte was to advance into Russia during the year of 1812. The Persian hosts had remained in the dim distance. Small armies had been provided at intervals, upon which the Romans might wear their strength, and the rest had been left to the climate—a climate under which the snow-born Heruli wilted and melted. Up to this point the campaign had been successful.

Now Julian won a bloody victory under the walls of Ctesiphon, and the city would doubtless have been his for the taking. Instead of capturing the great eastern capital, dazzled by the shade of Alexander, he saw only the glittering waters of India; and turning his army to the East, he burned his great fleet of provisions, and pushed out into the blight of the Asian wastes.

Speedily was he lost by his Persian guides—pretended deserters from the army of Sapor—and neither water nor food nor directions were discoverable. Speedily did he realize that aid from Procopius or Arsaces was not to be forthcoming. And just as speedily did the Lost Legions feel in force the prick of the Persian arrow and the heavy foot-fall of Sapor's charging elephants. For now the vanguard of the mighty monarch's main army neared the insolent invader, and, by sun-glare and star-glow, clouds of fleet horsemen attacked the painfully winding columns.

Amid such crucial conditions Julian appeared no whit less the

hero. During the march, the emperor rode fleet chargers, and where the attack raged fiercest, there was Julian wielding a bloody sword, encouraging his men by voice and action. Was the vanguard attacked?—the emperor was at hand. Was the rear threatened?—to that end of his line he immediately dashed. He, and he alone, kept the worn soldiers hoping and conquering; for conquer they still did, whenever a pitched battle occurred. And at night the emperor continued to sleep simply, to rise at an early hour, to write and to read concerning matters philosophical. The serenity of his demeanor during periods of comparative rest is not the least remarkable of his aspects during the Persian campaign.

In the meanwhile, Julian led his army northward in search of better climatic conditions. The movement was a retreat, and the Persian vanguard clung closely to the retiring Romans.

On a burning day Julian's rearguard was assaulted. Without donning his armor, the emperor leaps upon his steed and flies to the breach. The Persians are repulsed, but attack the Roman flank immediately. Still without armor, Julian rushes to the newly menaced point, and, in the midst of a cloud of dust, with arm upraised as an encouragement to his men, the fearless leader is struck by a flying javelin. In his side the steel struck, and the blood of Augustus returned to the earth of his ancestors.

For a short while the emperor lingered, surrounded in his tent by generals and friends. Heroically he lived and as a hero he died: dictating thoughts concerning the hereafter, while the Gauls, who had seen their beloved leader fall, made a bloody offering of the Persian attackers, that their hero's spirit might not depart unattended.

Who killed Julian? Either a Roman or a Persian. Had a Persian killed him, the slayer would not long have concealed that peculiar distinction. Yet the Persians swear that a treacherous Roman was responsible for the hero's death. Libanius attributes the killing to a Christian fanatic, but just who slew the warrior-philosopher is not known. The atmosphere of treachery surrounds his end. In the year 363 the Great Apostate died, and with his spirit vanished the impossible dreams upon which it had fed. At the age of thirty-two, this

marvelous combination of energy, courage, and talent perished.

Julian's great military errors were two in number: he failed to perceive the Empire's true danger—the Gothic storm-centre in lands beyond the Danube; he failed to end a successful Persian campaign with the capture of Ctesiphon.

He possessed the dream-power of Alexander the Great and of Napoleon Bonaparte. Perhaps he shared their ability to make such dreams real had circumstance seen fit, but such ability is measured by success, even though the success he brought to pass by the ability of a lieutenant to turn defeat into victory. Witness Napoleon at Marengo—fresh from the pass of the great St. Bernard. Remove Desaix from the action and the brilliant Scourge of Europe could not have ranked martially with the brilliant young apostate, who was perhaps the Corsican's equal in organization or administration, and his superior in every motive that fashioned his actions. One, the supreme example of self-abnegation and altruism, the other the colossal example of human selfishness.

Julian was a military leader of the first rank. He was, with Libanius, the best of the Greek writers in an age of general literary decadence. He was a very clear thinker and an acute debater, though the lack of scientific basis renders many of his arguments of no force to the present-day thinker. In the heat of polemic discussion he retained a certain pure dignity, and his rare sense of humor, embittered though it was, largely prevented him from drifting into fanatic stagnation. A note of human sympathy and understanding rings through his writings, the unmistakable quality that made him beloved of his soldiers and the provincials of Gaul. In Gaul Julian had been the idol of his people; for in Gaul—to the northward—was simplicity of life. In Antioch the bearded emperor was hated and despised; for in Antioch sensuality and vice displayed themselves brazenly. Virtue was essential to Julian, and he was dear to Virtue. Display and excess were entirely out of joint with his moral law. Then why did he grow up to hate the Christian Church? Because "society had corrupted Christianity; Christianity had not made society moral." And Julian had taken his first steps

on this earth when Christianity, reacting from the teachings of the early apostles, had degenerated to startling excesses of luxurious display, when Christian factions were at deadly work upon each other's throats, and when the only existing forms of undefiled Christianity were preserved from contact with a cruel mob that sadly needed the Christianizing of the early gospels. For the age of martyrs was past, and monachism alone interpreted the gospels in that fashion for which men had first died with hymns of praise upon their lips.

Despite the fact that his father and family had fallen by the knives of Christian assassins, the emperor might have become a devout follower of Jesus had he been influenced by the proper type of teacher. Had an Athanasius attempted to instill Christianity into the breast of the child—an Athanasius—a very man of fire and inspiration—instead of the prosaic and tedious Hecebolius or the didactic Bishop George, perhaps the imperial apostasy had never been. For Julian's adoption of Hellenism was born of sentiment and not of reason. And in a vain effort to supplant vulgarized Christianity with Christianized Hellenism, one of the most gifted creatures of an era squandered fruitlessly his multifold talents and incomparable virtue. Like a fiery, lonely rocket, and almost as rapidly, Julian shot upward, flared an instant, and disappeared—leaving no trace of his being upon the world's unsympathetic mass. His flight into the ether was witnessed by few among the onlookers.

Julian strove to revive the old nature-gods of Hellas into the national divinities of Rome. These broken idols were to form the objective side of the Roman worship,—the outer emblems. The theological justification of his stand he based upon Neo-Platonic philosophy. Julian's Neo-Platonism was not the cool reasoning of his teachers—Ædesius of Pergamos and Eusebius of the same city. He shrouded the principles of his learning in the occult practices and weird beliefs taught him by Maximus of Ephesus, the well-known mystic. This Maximus, who was regarded as a socerer by his brother philosophers, remained in the good graces of the emperor to the day of the latter's death—to such a degree was Julian a believer in fanatic mystery.

Julian laughed at the Christians,—“Galileans,” he called

them—because they declared the unity of the Godhead, yet divided it into three parts. He considered the theory a very ridiculous error. Yet his own conception of the supreme Deity was far more complex, and to the day of scientific explanation appears puerile in the extreme. The differentiation of races is attributed by the young emperor to differentiation of national Divinity. These national gods formed a secondary council below the supreme First Cause. Thus he strives to explain Jehovah of the Jews without denying Jove of the Romans.

Julian's religion was one that offered bodily happiness—not bodily indulgence. His creed was a guide to the pilgrims on this earth; he expected nothing from the hereafter; he ignored it. Herein Christianity and Hellenism differed cardinally; for the former regarded this life as a mere preparation for the spiritual existence to follow. Julian admired a man who died for his faith, but he could not understand why a man should court death as an article of his belief. Therefore he reviled the martyrs and saint-worship. Julian defended the Jews and upbraided the Christians, because, he said, they were neither Jews nor Hellenists. The Jews, he says, are narrow, because they consider their one little national god the sole deity of a universe; yet they are stanch monotheists. His own polytheism he places at the other extreme of the tolerance scale; for it denies salvation to no one whatsoever. The Christians, he says, profess to be an off-shoot of Judaism; yet are not monotheists. They are actually believers in polytheism; yet they are as intolerent as the Jews of all other sects. Hence, while preserving the vices of Judaism, they have preserved none of its virtues, nor have they the virtues of polytheism into which they have inadvertently fallen. To the Christians, he says: "You are like leeches. You have sucked from all sides the infected blood, and have left the pure."

The emperor was remarkably familiar with both the Old and the New Testaments, and he used texts from each with great fluency in his polemics against the Christian Church. He saw the beauty of Christian truths as laid down by the disciples: he recognized the degeneracy of the hated faith and the obscuring of those truths under a covering of golden vice. And

he took those truths for his own. He seized the brand of Christianity and fought that religion with its own weapons. In other words, he Christianized Paganism. The act of incorporation does not appear in the light of plagiarism. Unconsciously Julian was attracted by the good, and he stood for one principle hitherto unheard of among pagan sects—the equality of man. In one of his letters, the following Christ-like expression is discovered: “We should render our possessions common to all men, more liberally to the good, and then to all the miserable, and to all according to their necessities. And I will also add, although it may seem a paradox, that it is a blessed thing to give food and clothing even to our enemies, because we give to the man, and not to the character.” One notable feature of Julian’s attempted religious reformation was his treatment of the Jews. The people of this sect had long been regarded as arrogantly prosperous by the Roman emperors, and any means whatsoever was frequently employed to squeeze the ultimate penny from the Empire’s Hebraic element. Julian took an opposite stand. He professed to admire the spirit of equanimity displayed by the Jews under adverse circumstances. While deploring their tribal conception of the universe, he knew that slight love existed between Jew and Galilean, and he made the former his ally against the latter. He caused the unjust tax-rolls to be destroyed, and, just before the fatal Persian campaign, issued an edict to the Jews of the Empire, in which he spoke of rebuilding the Temple at Jerusalem,—the Temple destroyed by Titus in the reign of Vespasian. Materials for the projected construction were in fact gathered in the province of Palestine coincident with Julian’s advance against Sapor.

The emperor criticized Christianity exhaustively. He insisted upon calling the Christians “Galileans,” thus verbally restricting a world propaganda to its tiny territorial origin. He called the Christian belief barren and desolate. Its devotees, he pointed out, refused to look upon the beautiful things of this life and regarded death as a most desirable event. They worshipped the dead—his version of adoration of the saints. The divinity of their Godhead was refuted in their own New Testament by the attempted proof of Christ’s Davidic origin. They professed

charity and brotherly love, and admire poverty and learning; yet their tolerance was far from charitable, their brotherly love was buried in favor of the fratricide's knife, the wealth of the Church was enormously evident, and the bishops themselves were remarkably versed in material lore. Julian's was an age of schism. The Gospels in their simplicity would not—could not—have been recognized by a Christian brother. Not only was the Church weltering in wealth and vice: it had assumed preëminent features of its severest antithesis. Christianity had been diffused by Hellenistic art. The eloquence of Greece had been learned from pagan masters by Christian pupils who preached destruction of those very masters. So Christianity had become Hellenized. Now Julian saw that Christianity claimed brotherly love and charity among its tenets. Also he clearly realized that Christianity was not practising its preachings. So he assumed these orphan virtues to his philosophy, and he Christianized Hellenism.

Julian hated the Christians. He clearly loved Paganism. Nero, Decius, and Diocletian likewise had hated the Christians, and their reigns were punctuated with fiery crosses and arenas wet with the gore of martyrs. The Christians had been annoying to Nero and dangerous to Diocletian, but by the time of Julian they had become a majority in the Empire—neither annoying nor dangerous, but overmastering. It is difficult to persecute a majority, and Julian did not desire their blood. However, his treatment of the Christians, whom he despised and hated, may be regarded as one of the most splendid tolerant actions recorded of our human race.

For the Christians did not remain passive under him. They sought martyrdom insultingly before the very eyes of the emperor, and he refused to smear his name with blood. Only when Christian violence—and pagan for that matter—was directed against the Roman State, did Julian allow armed intervention. And then he ordered it unhesitatingly. At times he was indeed sorely tried. Christian mobs insisted upon destroying pagan shrines. But the torch that inflamed the emperor's soul with rage could not lead him to commit murder. Incendiaries he punished, but the man who merely cursed him, he acquitted.

The crucial test of his self-restraint probably occurred when fire consumed the celebrated temple to Apollo in the sacred grove of Daphne near Antioch. Also the worship of the bones of martyrs was to the imperial eye as a red rag to an angry bull; yet Julian refrained from scattering the Christian relics. It is true that he allowed pagan mobs to go unpunished on several occasions after violence had been done to Christian persons; but so obedient was he to the philosophy of his conscience that semi-hypocritical reproofs—minus the sting of punishment—were invariably issued to the offending populace. Witness the case of George of Cappadocia, Bishop of Alexandria, a wicked man, who deserved worse than death at the hands of a mob. Pagan lawlessness was rare; for pagan enthusiasm was scarce discoverable among the masses, and when that dull ember blazed for blood, the inciting stimulus was more than sufficient. Indeed Julian's reproof could have been dispensed with in the instance above cited. George of Alexandria's was a popular funeral with all sects of his city. One act of genuine persecution can be affixed to Julian's record. He basely caluminated, and then banished, Titus, Bishop of Bostra, a good man, and a worthy Roman citizen. As much as he hated Athanasius, his conduct towards the fiery bishop cannot be termed persecution; for he felt the man to be the mortar of that wall which he strove to o'ertopple. Yet no actual violence was done him.

In his treatment of Christianity as an entity, Julian disavowed all violence. He insinuated his superiority over those who professed a creed of forgiveness, yet could not forgive. While admitting Paganism to the status of a state religion, he proclaimed tolerance to all other forms of belief, though continually deploring their barren ignorance and demoniac stubbornness. His religion was a dogmatic belief opposing a dogmatic belief, but his dogmatism was not one of intolerance, as that of the "Galileans" was. Fifteen hundred years elapsed between the death of Julian, and the world's acceptance—not yet realized largely—of his principle of toleration. His announcement of general sufferance to religious sects is synonymous with Constantine's utterance in the Edict of Milan—save for the presence of a state religion in Julian's decree. However, Constan-

tine's edict was speedily forgotten by that monarch, state religion appeared, and dogmatic intolerance was strongly founded. Julian, in the midst of his bitter disappointments and unqualified disillusionings never forsook the principles laid down by his moral dictates.

In this instance the moral philosophy which refused to be angered to the point of bloodshed coincided with expediency. The innumerable Christian sects hated one another as cordially as they one and all detested Paganism. Each sect believed itself alone to be assured of eternal salvation. Now Julian, in pursuance of his edict of toleration, invited the bishops of all sects to convene with him and consider a universal Christian code, that schism might give way to peace within the Empire. As the wily emperor had foreseen, pandemonium resulted, and Julian was given an opportunity to scarify Christian love and charity. Tumult among the Christians afforded the emperor a sort of grim delight, buttressed his convictions, and, maybe, provided food or excuse for conversion to his own Paganism. He was in the habit of despoiling wealthy families among the Christians of riches—which he devoted to charitable purposes—saying that he was merely helping them heavenward; as their Saviour demanded a life of poverty.

By decree, Julian closed to Christian teachers the chairs of rhetoric and literature in all state schools. He did not care to permit unsympathetic or hostile interpretations of Homer and Hesiod; these books constituted his Bible, the sacred acme of Hellenism. To Christian pupils he did not close the schools.

He has been severely censured by many critics for his prevention of Christian exposition of pagan mythology. Before condemning his action, we should note Julian's viewpoint. Though Homer's myths are unbelievable to us, they were not to the emperor, and he revolted when his sanctuary was violated—a most human action.

Julian was to be Pontifex Maximus—chief hierophant of his religious system. From him emanated all instructions to the state priesthood. His priests were to be the most moral of men—examples of noble virtue to their fellow-beings. His ideals were too lofty for fulfilment upon this earth. He dis-

closed his religious conceptions in frequent circulars, and these writings are permeated with an overpowering sentiment of heartfelt brotherly love and human admiration for the divinely beautiful. Many exquisite, hymn-like passages are met with. The following quotation is taken from the closing paragraph of a discourse addressed to the Mother of the Gods:—

“I beseech thee concede to all men happiness, the summit of which is the knowledge of the gods; cause the Roman people to cast out the sin of impiety, and may a benignant fate preserve to them the Empire for many thousands of years. Permit me to reap as fruit of my devotion to thee, the truth of divine science, perfection in worship, virtue and success in all political and military enterprises which we undertake, and a termination of life regretless and glorious, together with the hope of drawing near unto thee.”

In his “Discourse against Heraclius,” his God, the Sun, speaks thus:—

“Go on thy way, therefore, with good hope, since we shall always be with thee,—I, Minerva and Mercury with all the other gods in Olympus in the air and on the earth—as long as thou art respectful to us, faithful to thy friends, kind to thy subjects, ruling and guiding them towards that which is best. Never permit thyself to become a slave to thine own passions or theirs. Go thou, therefore, by land and by sea, obeying without hesitation our laws, and do not let anyone, whether man or woman, familiar or stranger, induce thee to forget our commands. If thou observe them thou wilt be loved by us, respected by our faithful worshippers, feared by wicked and vile-minded men. Know thou that this carnal body was given thee in order that thou shouldst be able to accomplish this duty. We wish to purge thy house out of respect for thy ancestors. Remember that thou hast an immortal soul procreated by us, and that if thou followest our orders, thou wilt be among the gods, and, together with us, thou wilt contemplate our Father!”

The emperor caused the long-neglected temples to be reopened, and pagan altars exchanged their mould for the ashes of sacrifice and the blood of many victims. For Julian slaughtered victims on a scale tremendous. The spoiled Antiochenes in many limericks derided him openly as a butcher. He held pageants in honor of the various members of his Pantheon, and

sought to impress the beauty of Greek symbolism upon his subjects by ocular demonstration. He organized dispensaries of food and the vital necessities for the poor of all sects, and deflected large sums from the imperial treasury to these depots for the relief of the pauper class.

Julian sought to convert by many subterfuges. In addition to the few whom his propaganda enveloped by exhortation and the many professional apostates, seekers of court favor who rushed to his arms, the emperor sought to influence waverers and staunch Christians variously. He offered imperial favor to those who would throw off the incubus of Christianity and again worship the gods of their forefathers. He reviewed his army and required each legionary—pagan and Christian alike—to throw incense upon a pagan altar as he passed before his eyes. Casting the incense was thus made conditional to loyalty to Rome. He exhibited his portrait in frequented public places together with a likeness of some Greek god, and all citizens were required to bow before the representation of a Roman emperor. Here was a nice dilemma for the Christian passerby who desired neither to break a Roman statute nor to bend to an odious Olympic deity. Very few of his converts were desirable characters. The men who measured up to Julian's desires were few and scattered, and they needed no converting. Human beings such as he sought could not be found for his priesthood. Practically every religious official appointed by him was a conscienceless embezzler, who changed faith, sect, and faction as the throne shifted. To a man, the high-priests of Julian might number their apostasies by the changes of state religion. The money appropriated for a poor relief got no nearer its object than the large pocket of some dispenser of the imperial charities.

And Julian saw it—saw it all. Not at once, but rapidly the mask fell, and he viewed the hollowness of his edifice. Those who bowed to the altar of Apollo did not worship, and outward expression satisfied Julian only when it divulged inward conviction. He saw the purity of his pageants and priesthood befouled by the unavoidable presence of courtesans and misers. He felt keenly the antipathetic attitude of his Christian subjects. The personal insults hurled at him by the citizens of

Antioch, pagan as well as Christian, lifted a veil, and he bitterly realized that he was casting his consecrated pearls before swine. His was a soul too haughty—or lofty—for communion of the heart with his brother philosophers, and he loved no woman on this earth. His tremendous yearnings were scarcely apprehended by any living being; and he realized it. But he clinched his jaws tightly and fought to the death, nor did his disappointment ever spur him to intolerance. He refused to assuage his propagandist defeat with libations of blood. Always to the public he remained the same decisive, enigmatic, ink-dauber. Always to his legionaries was he the heroic leader and tireless swordsman,—their big brother. Always became he the philosopher and author when hours of darkness were upon the land, and his Empire slept.

Was the ice of despair in his heart when he so rashly exposed himself in Persia? Did he realize that Hellenism could only exist by becoming Christianity? And his religion was not a quibble to him! Rather than dishonor it, he was willing to see his soul's desire fade into the infinite. There can be no compromise where belief is so ardent. He was the loneliest man that ever stood in the gaze of the world; the bravest man that ever strove to catch the tide in a sieve.

The sun—his Sun—rose upon him, and he stretched his crimsoned face to the god and soared aloft. The sun rode above him, and still he gazed, bronze-like, into the heavens, and men knew him not. The sun set upon him and his purpled visage followed the godhead to its grave, but men saw only a dying emperor with a javelin wound in his shattered side.

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